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Regulatory  
Programs

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

Washington, DC  
20250

# Commodity Specification

## Fresh Vegetables



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**I. General****A. U.S. Standards**

Fresh vegetables (product/commodity) procured under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades of fresh vegetables (U.S. Standards) effective on the date of the Invitation for Offers to Sell (Invitation). The U.S. Standards are published separately (7 C.F. R. part 51) and are incorporated herein and made a part of this Commodity Specification.

**B. Exceptions to U.S. Standards**

Additional exceptions may be specified in the applicable Invitation. Any authorized exceptions contained in the applicable Invitation shall have precedence over the requirements contained herein, for that Invitation only.

**C. Product Origin**

1. Commodities delivered pursuant to this Commodity Specification shall have originated from crops that have been 100% grown and packed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, (hereinafter referred to as the United States). See Section I.F. of Announcement FV-314.
2. If the contractor handles any commodity originating from sources other than the United States, the contractor must have a written plan to segregate the commodity. This segregation plan will include an identification and record system for all commodities to ensure they are completely segregated and cannot be used to fulfill contracts awarded by USDA. Such segregation plan must be made available to representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
3. The contractor must maintain positive written documentation records evidencing 100 percent domestic origin, to the grower level. Contractors must also ensure that the documentation provided by any sub-contractors demonstrates the same level of traceability. The burden of proof of compliance is on the contractor.

Documentation may include load or warehouse storage receipts for fresh products (i.e., bin tags), product coding explanations, warehousing records, shipping or payment records, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin.

4. Contractors must provide the domestic origin certification (Exhibit D, located in Announcement FV-314) for each delivery shipment and submit to representatives of the AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Fresh Products Branch (USDA Grader) when requesting inspection service. USDA graders will select and review at least one code for each contract to determine compliance with the Agency's domestic origin requirements.
5. Such records must be available for review by the Government in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1. In the event of an audit, AMS auditors will examine as many codes as is necessary to verify compliance.
6. Self-certifications by contractors and sub-contractors will not be accepted.
7. Failure to observe this requirement may lead to suspension or debarment, contract termination, and penalties at Title 18, Section 1001 of the US Code concerning falsification of information.

**D. Manufacturing Practices**

- 1) Good Handling Practices (GHP)

All fresh vegetables must be produced in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's Good Manufacturing Practices (21 C.F.R., Part 110)

- 2) USDA Federal/Federal-State Audit Verification Program for GHP

Successful bidders, and any sub-contractors, are required to undergo an annual packing facility audit.

The primary purpose of conducting a packing facility audit is to verify that the facility has taken steps to minimize microbial food safety hazards in fresh fruit and vegetables, and to ensure program integrity, uniformity, and consistency nationwide.

**E. Packing Season**

All fresh vegetables must be from the current packing season/crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Invitation.

**F. Containers and Packing**

1. The product delivered to USDA shall be packed in new, good quality cartons, so constructed as to insure acceptance by common carrier or other carrier for safe transportation for domestic shipment. These cartons shall be of the same dimensions as those used in normal commercial transactions. These packing

requirements provide that pack shall be at least fairly tight or fairly well filled. The tolerances applicable under such packing requirements shall apply.

2. The containers and case markings shall meet the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42). In addition to any other commercial markings, each carton shall show the grower's or shipper's name and address, variety, grade (state grade may be shown if in compliance with paragraph II, and size by count).

### **G. Palletization Requirements**

1. Pallets

Pallets must be 48 X 40 inch, non-reversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. New pallets must be good quality wood. Used pallets must be No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood. If pallet exchange is desired, the contractor shall arrange for pallet exchange with consignees. USDA is in no way responsible for arrangement of pallet exchange.

2. Unitization

Each delivery unit of fresh vegetables must be unitized. Shipping cases must be stacked and secured from top to bottom, so that each container and layer of containers becomes an integral part of the pallet. Either stretch wrapping with plastic film, netting, or "lock 'n pop" is acceptable.

## **II. Individual Commodity Specifications –**

### **A. Corn (husked)**

1. Grade - U.S. No. 1, Husked.
2. Cartons – packing shall be at least fairly tight or fairly well filled.
3. Size – 4 inch minimum unless otherwise specified; Per Pallet – 80
4. Net weight – 24 pounds: Gross weight – 26 pounds.
5. Top ice is required on all shipments.
6. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 36° F.
7. Corn in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations

### **B. Onions**

1. Grade – U.S. No. 1 or better (en route or at destination tolerances apply).
2. Size must be repacker/prepacker (minimum diameter 1 ¾ inches and maximum diameter 3 inches) with at least 60 percent 2 inches or larger in diameter.

3. Onions in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations.
4. Types of pack and size requirements: bags – 10/5 lb. mesh sacks to a shipping container.
5. Must be yellow or white type onions only.

**C. Potatoes**

1. Grade - U.S. No. 1.
2. Pack and Size Requirements –  
50 pounds cartons, size 100 or 110;  
50 pounds bags, size A, 2 inch or 4 ounces minimum.  
Packing shall be at least fairly tight or fairly well filled.
3. Types –  
50 pounds **cartons** –Russet, Baking  
50 pounds **bags**- Irish, Round White.
4. The grade requirements referred herein are defined in the United States Standards for Grades of Potatoes, effective on the date of the invitation.
5. Potatoes in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the contractor shall note the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center and tail) on the shipping manifest.

**D. Tomatoes**

1. Grade – U.S. Combination Grade with 85% or more U.S. No. 1 Quality.
2. The grade requirements referred herein are defined in the United States Standards for Grades of Tomatoes, effective on the date of the Invitation.
3. Cartons – 25 pounds, at least fairly well filled.
4. Size and Color- to be detailed in individual invitations.
6. Tomatoes in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the contractor shall note the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center and tail) on the shipping manifest.

**III. Inspection****A. Requirements**

USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Fresh Products Branch (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1.

USDA inspection of **fresh vegetables must be performed at destination**. The count (number) of packages shall be certified by Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service. Subject to Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1, the acceptability of the quality, and packaging, of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader.

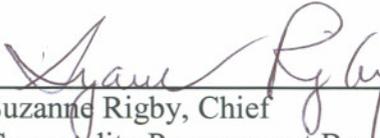
Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh Vegetables and Related Products (7 C.F.R. part 51), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. part 42.140), effective on the date of the Invitation.

**B. Procedures**

The Contractor must give the USDA Inspection office at least 72 hours advance notice when scheduling inspection service.

**IV. Failure to Meet Specifications**

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot of fresh vegetables fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may, at its option, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the contract price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.

  
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Suzanne Rigby, Chief  
Commodity Procurement Branch  
Fruit and Vegetables Programs  
Agricultural Marketing Service